

Date Signed: September 16, 1987

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Definition of a Non-Transient, Non-Community Water System

FROM: Paul M. Baltay, Director  
State Programs Division (WH-550E)TO: Regional Drinking Water Branch Chiefs  
Regions I-X

As you know, the recent VOC regulations officially defined a new category of water systems - non-transient, non-community water systems (NTNCWS). Section 141.2 of the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations defines a NTNCWS as a public water system that is not a community water system and regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons over six months per year (emphasis added). We have recently been asked to further define "regular" as it appears in the definition.

In our view, "regular" is more of a qualitative than quantitative term. A sizeable portion of many individual's daily water consumption occurs away from home. Further, in most instances, this consumption occurs at the same place, from the same water supply for extended periods of time. If the water being consumed in such cases is being supplied by a non-community system rather than a community system, a gap in health protection exists. The NTNCWS category, as noted in the preamble, was conceived to protect individuals from potential adverse health effects as a result of long-term consumption of water from a non-residential source. This protection is to encompass schools, day care centers, nursing homes, institutions such as prisons, factories and offices which provide water to a fixed population of 25 or more people. In addition, other service areas such as hotels, resorts, hospitals, and restaurants were intended to be covered if they employ more than 25 people and are open six or more months of the year. Although we're reluctant to define regular service or fixed population in terms of hours per day and days per week, you probably will be, or have been asked for such a quantitative definition. We therefore recommend using four hours or more per day, for four or more days per week, for 26 or more weeks per year as a guideline for the term "regular" as it relates to NTNCWSs. Our concern in offering such a definition is that we will all become mired in numerical games and lose sight of the fundamental intent of protecting health.

Our goal is for States to have completed a good (not perfect) inventory of NTNCWSs by October 1, 1988. We believe this goal can be effectively achieved by reviewing service area characteristics and populations. Systems which are schools, day care centers, nursing homes, institutions, factories and businesses with populations of 25 or more would be reclassified as

NTNCWSs. Large hotels, resorts complexes, hospitals, etc., will most likely employ more than 25 people and would be classed as NTNCWSs. Other non-communities can be checked on a planned schedule (which could extend beyond October 1, 1988 if the State has a large number of NCWSs). States should, however, be able to begin FY 1989 with a reasonably sound NTNCWS inventory.

The current version of FRDS (I5) will accept the NTNCWS designation beginning February 1, 1986. FRDS II will process NTNCWS designations as soon as FRDS II is available.

If there are any objections to these guidelines, please let me know. Otherwise I will assume that you and the States in your Region are in agreement with our philosophy and goals.